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PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK RUEHMOS

DE RUEHGB #1440 1212043

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 012043Z MAY 06

FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4216

INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001440

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/01/2016

TAGS: PGOV KDEM I2

SUBJECT: MEHDI HAFEDH: IRAQIYYA LIST NOT YET PREPARED FOR
MINISTRY DISCUSSIONS

REF: BAGHDAD 1383

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR MICHAEL J. ADLER FOR REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Iraqiyya List (Allawi) senior member Dr. Mehdi Hafedh told PolOffs April 28 that he had discussed possible changes to the National Policy Council with Ayad Allawi that might enable Allawi to accept the Secretary General position. He asserted that Allawi will not accept a Deputy Prime Minister position under PM-Designate Maliki. He claimed the Iraqiyya List was told by the United Iraqi Coalition that it could have either a Deputy Prime Minister position, the Finance Ministry, or MOI, but did not indicate that Iraqiyya had conveyed its own views back to other parties. PolOffs told Hafedh that Iraqiyya should participate in a government of national unity and should reach decisions as quickly as possible on which ministries they would like and which names they will put forward. END SUMMARY

Proposed Changes to the National Policy Council (NPC)

¶2. (C) Council of Representatives (CoR) and senior Iraqiyya list member Dr. Mehdi Hafedh told PolOffs April 28 that he had talked to Ayad Allawi the previous evening about possible changes to the National Policy Council (NPC), elaborating on those mentioned to PolOff April 27 (reftel). These include:

-- Reducing the members from 19 to 9. The council would include the President, PM, Speaker, KRG President, and the leaders of the 5 largest blocs.
-) Electing a Secretary General (in this case, Allawi) who would be in charge of the secretariat, agenda, and follow-up.
-- Eliminating voting. All decisions would be made by consensus.
-- Submitting NPC authorizing legislation to the CoR to give it a legal basis.

¶3. (C) While Hafedh foresaw no problems with these proposed changes from the Kurdish Alliance or Tawaffuq, he acknowledged that it will not be an easy sell with the Shia Coalition. In response to PolOffs pointing out that a nine-member NPC would exclude the Sadrists, Hafedh suggested that the NPC could possibly be expanded to eleven. He then added that the UIC has taken a softer line on Iraqiyya, saying that some of the Shia Islamists had supported Allawi for Vice President, in particular, Sadrists Baha al-Araji and Salam al-Maliki.

Allawi Will Not Serve As DPM Under Anyone

¶4. (C) Hafedh stated that Tawaffuq should not have the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) position since they had used up their "points" to get the Vice President and Speaker's positions, leaving the DPM position for Iraqiyya or Hewar. He then said the UIC had stipulated that, if Iraqiyya took a DPM position, it would not get a sovereign ministry. He said that if this is true, Iraqiyya would opt for a sovereign ministry. He then assured poloffs that Ayad Allawi will not serve as DPM under PM-designate al-Maliki.

Very Unprepared For Ministry Discussions

¶5. (C) When asked whether the Iraqiyya leadership had discussed which ministries they want and which candidate names they would put forth, Hafedh responded that they had not done so (aside from Hafedh's own interest in the Ministry of Finance). PolOffs encouraged the Iraqiyya List to identify their candidates and preferred ministries before the cabinet talks advance too far along without them.

¶6. (C) Comment. Hafedh seemed preoccupied with his own personal role rather than focused on the ministries for which his party would offer candidates. The longer Iraqiyya debates this question internally the more likely it risks being left behind as government formation talks move to the final stages. End Comment.

KHALILZAD